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1961/10/12

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12 October 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Special Group
SUBJECT: Cuban Program Report

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OR CALL EXT. 4134

1. The purpose of this report is to present the status of the CIA operational effort under the covert program approved last July by the Special Group.

The Cuban Covert Program emphasized two priority goals. First, collection of intelligence on significant aspects of the Cuban internal situation, and second, attempted identification of Cuban political leadership which with appropriate aid might develop strength in Cuba adequate to overthrow and succeed Castro.

The activities budgeted in support of these goals were divided into four categories, each of which will be discussed more fully below.

- a. Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence.
- b. Political Action.
- c. Propaganda.
- d. Paramilitary.

2. Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence.

These activities have become progressively more hazardous due to increased internal Cuban controls. A number of important individuals have been arrested; freedom of movement is even more difficult since strangers (Cuban or otherwise) are suspect and closely watched; successful illegal entry

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is daily more complicated (although, of course, legal travel is still possible within limits) and the population generally (in addition to the G-2, the militia and block controls) has been alerted to be on guard for and to report any counter-regime actions or suspicions thereof.

In spite of the above, we have been able to maintain contact with [redacted] agents. Communications are by secret writing except in one case where W/T is available and working. It must be stated, however, that the geographic distribution of these agents is unsatisfactory since all but [redacted] are in Havana Province and all but [redacted] are in the city of Havana.

In addition, we have been able to give brief training, including an SW system, to legal travelers returning to Cuba. Such trainees average one additional person a week in Cuba. Since Cuba specifically limits the duration of a traveler's stay outside the country (48 to 72 hours often being the maximum period) the training given is undoubtedly restricted.

Further possible sources are in training, the total being forty to forty-five individuals, some of whom will be mainly intelligence agents but many of whom will have other duties as well, e.g., political organization and action, propaganda and paramilitary (subterfuge) recruitment and training.

The Cuban exile (political) groups have been worked with closely as indicated below but mainly in the political field. They have not as yet been very productive of intelligence sources mainly because they are unable to

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effective infiltration (except legal travel) and because the individuals proposed by them need substantial training before being sent. Most of their old contacts are blown and cannot risk returning except to live "black" which is not easy or productive for extrained individuals.

In counter-intelligence, we have some active penetrations of the Communist Party, C-2, the Ministry of Justice, the Government News Agency, and the Air Force Academy. These are not adequate particularly as they are not high level. Consequently increased coverage is being sought. In addition useful information is being obtained from [redacted] agents operating from and reporting to third countries. Finally, a Cuban organization of about 30 agents has continued to operate in the Miami area entirely in support of the U.S. The Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC) attempted to take this organization under its jurisdiction but the members of their own volition refused. Through their efforts and those of their and other agents, the U. S. is reasonably well apprised of the activities of the Cuban exile groups and, it is believed, of Castro's efforts to penetrate the U.S. and the Cuban exile activities.

Improvement of W/T internal assets is a high priority. There are four or five trained operators for whom operational planning is almost complete and who should be in place in the next thirty days. An additional eight or ten of these previously trained may be persuaded to return to Cuba. They are in Miami and are being recontacted. Five to ten more are ready for a full training course which will take ninety days. If five operators could be

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placed in Cuba and well dispersed geographically, thin but adequate coverage would be available since the extensive SW systems could handle the remainder of the traffic.

3. Political Action.

All the known Cuban exile groups have been worked with from the point of view of operational planning and support. Most of them started with extensive plans which they could not support but now are pursuing what we consider more practical, more manageable projects. A brief outline of the present status is:

a. MRR. A small operation scheduled for early November to contact the party and determine its exact situation. Also, an effort to organize a recruitment effort will be made.

MRR/C, the dissident wing of the MRR, now has a team in Cuba in an effort to infiltrate the internal MRR/C leader in order to arrange negotiations to settle MRR party differences.

b. MRP. An operation is planned as soon as a full team is produced by MRP. The team will consist of a small group for intelligence, political organization and sabotage with commo. MRP is still trying to find the last two men required.

c. MDG. The leaders are discredited as they have been unable to produce any operational assets or possibilities.

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4. DRT (Students). Sixteen men in training for sabotage operations. Training is general (not limited to sabotage) and should be completed in two weeks. The group will be divided into several small teams for infiltration.

5. LR. We are working with the main leader who is presently preparing a plan. He has a boat with a 4000 mile range which should prove a useful asset.

6. 30th November. Ten men have been selected by the party for training which is expected to begin within a few days. They will be given general training but will have sabotage missions.

7. Duque (formerly Escambray leader). He is preparing to go back to his home territory (Sierra del Cristal) with a W/T operator as soon as possible.

8. Cuban Intelligence Organization. Three operations are about to be despatched to get intelligence, form internal nets and reception teams, and establish infiltration routes and reception capability. They will concentrate on Pinar del Rio and Oriente.

9. Dr. Miro Cardona and the C.R.C. See paragraph 6. below.

Other Cubans are being worked with but insufficient progress has been made to justify a report.

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The external exile groups are far from organized or coordinated. This is a high priority problem but has, in our opinion, a connection with the U.S. relationship with Dr. Mirra Cardona and the C&C. Consequently, it will be deferred, as indicated above, to paragraph 6 below.

The internal opposition has made some efforts at consolidation and organization but has not advanced too far. Activity has been limited due to the difficulties already mentioned and, moreover, incentives for better organization have been lacking since an operational relationship productive of outside support has not as yet been established. It has been noted that no coastal point presently exists through which supplies can be infiltrated by maritime effort. Boats can be landed but no reception capable of moving beached supplies is available. The Cuban exiles are just as devoid of such assets as the U.S.

4. Propaganda.

Costs have been reduced in the propaganda field but even so this is the one activity which is running ahead of its budget. The overage can be covered by some shifts of money from other activities without major difficulty. Speaking tours are being encouraged by women's groups, teachers, students, jurists, lawyers, and labor. Also, as indicated above, the D&E is training a number of members for infiltration to Cuba as to FORU, a labor organization. Moreover, publications - [REDACTED] - continue at somewhat

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reduced budgets while some newspaper support will be given for another two or three months. [REDACTED] for example, has been given money through this calendar year. [REDACTED] a news sheet for editors and intellectuals, receives encouragement for its Spanish and English publication (weekly). Substantial numbers of cheap pamphlets are being printed exposing Castro's political lies.

Radio Swan still broadcasts about 125 hours a week on both medium and short wave while approximately 160 a week of non-attributable anti-Castro broadcasts are transmitted by about 60 Latin American stations while 59 hours weekly are broadcast by three Florida stations. The latter are prepared by Cubans sponsored by the U. S. while the Latin American programs are effected through controlled distribution of taped programs.

A ship capable of medium and short wave broadcasts is ready for use. It will also have a capability previously operated within Cuba of intruding radio broadcasts through TV channels.

In addition, a program for the placement of selected Cuban students in Latin American universities for agitation and propaganda is well under way. Sixty students are available, three of whom have been actually placed and twenty-one of whom are processing.

5. Paramilitary.

Most of the paramilitary activities have been mentioned above under Political Action since Cuban political groups were involved and since the

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paramilitary activity was only a part of the projects described.

In addition, however, a fully trained commando element of 35 Cubans is in being and ready to operate from Florida. Some of the men will be used for instructors, for armed support of ships and other needed activities with the result that after their reassignment a highly select group of at least twenty men will be retained for exclusively commando or similar type operations.

Ships, counting those presently owned and those to be purchased, are considered adequate for any foreseeable maritime operational requirements. No air operations are presently planned.

Due to the internal controls mentioned above, it has become apparent that infiltration, particularly of weapons, ammunition, and sabotage material, has become difficult and will continue to be difficult. Nevertheless, we still are planning minor key sabotage. Some such sabotage is now occurring in Cuba without our support. It is apparently being accomplished by opposition groups with material provided by us in the past.

Moreover, harassment (very small scale) sabotage can be planned and sponsored from the outside. Likewise, internal groups can be organized and trained which, as indicated, is the basis for a number of the external projects mentioned above.

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In addition, the commando unit can infiltrate in small groups either on a hit-and-run basis or on the basis of infiltrating and spending some time (e.g., a week or two) overhauling the target and preparing the operation. A hit-and-run minor key operation is planned for the near future. For purposes of this project, a minor key operation is one which:

- a) has a favorable chance of avoiding detection prior to detonation (e.g., a lightly guarded or unguarded target);
- b) will reasonably appear to the Cubans to have been organized and run from the inside; and
- c) will not cause major internal disruption.

Planning has been substantially completed on a number of larger possible targets and these will be presented for approval as soon as appropriate. We want to run some smaller operations first with commando teams and test internal reactions to the creation of additional teams. Moreover, we need to establish additional infiltration routes for men as well as material.

6. Special Aspects of Relations with Dr. Miro Cardona and the GRU.

Although it would be inappropriate in this report to discuss this problem in detail, it is sufficiently important to deserve mention. It will be considered in detail with the State Department and, if necessary, brought again to the Special Group.

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Miro is being paid a substantial monthly budget which largely covers administrative support of his organization and portions of Tony Varona's former FRO now allied with the OAC. In addition, Miro expects that these payments will continue at the rate of about \$30,000 a month until at least the end of this fiscal year, i.e., 1 July 1962.

The fact is that these payments almost entirely support individuals of Miro's choosing and, in addition, provide funds for Miro to disburse as he desires. Some but very little operational benefit is realized. The inevitable result is that Miro tends to devote his time to the protection and consolidation of the exile organization which he controls rather than on methods of improving internal Cuban opposition. Moreover, the support to Miro discourages other opposition leaders who construe it as evidence of a U.S. selection of Miro as the leader of a post-Castro government. Miro, it might be said, does not discourage this impression, inaccurate as it may be.

The above situation is inconsistent with present U.S. policy, which is not as yet prepared to select a post-Castro leader, which desires to encourage internal rather than external leaders, and which does not wish to discourage in any way the emergence of strong leadership. As indicated above, possible solutions are being sought and further discussions with the State Department are planned. In the meantime, however, it should be

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recognized, as stated above, that coordination of the Cuban opposition is experiencing trouble.

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